

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-21 are pending in the application. Independent claim 1 has been amended to overcome the rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, but is not amended substantively. Claims 2, 3, and 8 have been amended to correct informalities. The amendments are fully supported by the application as originally filed.

On page 2 of the Office Action of 01/04/2007, claims 1-21 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being “generally narrative and indefinite, failing to conform with current U.S. practice.”

As recited in independent claim 1, as amended, “fingerprint information” read by a first fingerprint information reading means is distinguished from “second fingerprint information” read by a second fingerprint information reading means. Further, the “both of” language is deleted in response to page 3, first paragraph of the Office Action of 01/04/2007. It is believed that the above amendments to independent claim 1 obviate the rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph.

Independent claim 19 recites a terminal apparatus connected to a scanner in which a user’s fingerprint information is read by and temporarily stored in both (1) the terminal apparatus, and (2) the scanner; and when a “fingerprint information collating means” determines that the fingerprint information matches, the terminal apparatus is permitted to operate the scanner (see independent claim 19). Independent claims 1 and 16 include similar limitations.

Therefore, by comparing the fingerprint information temporarily stored in the scanner with the fingerprint information temporarily stored in the terminal apparatus, the Applicant’s claimed invention provides an authentication function before allowing operation of the scanner to read a document image.

Claim 19 was rejected under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese Publication 2001-045192 (hereinafter “the ‘192 publication”). Claims 1-18, 20, and 21 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘192 publication in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication US 2001/0016912 to Takahashi. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Referring to the English-language abstract and FIG. 1 of the ‘192 publication, a scanner 1 (unlabeled in FIG. 1) includes a fingerprint read section 14a which reads “a fingerprint pattern of the operator,” and transfers the fingerprint pattern to a server 3, which refers to a table that specifies an address of a client computer 2, such that a read original image is transferred to the client computer 2 based on the address.

In the ‘192 publication, the user’s fingerprints must be stored in the server 3 in advance, so that when a new fingerprint pattern is read by the scanner 1, a comparison can be made by the server 3.

However, as recited in independent claim 19, a “fingerprint information storing means” of the terminal apparatus only temporarily stores the user’s fingerprint information. In other words, when the user operates the scanner, the user’s fingerprint information is read by both (1) the terminal apparatus, and (2) the scanner. In contrast, according to the ‘192 publication, the user’s fingerprints are stored in the server 3 in advance of scanning, which does not correspond to “temporarily storing the fingerprint information” as claimed.

Regarding the rejection of independent claims 1 and 16 over the proposed combination of the ‘192 publication in view of Takahashi, even if the ‘192 publication was modified by Takahashi, the proposed combination would not teach or suggest “temporarily storing the fingerprint information” in both a scanner and a terminal apparatus as claimed.

In Takahashi, similar to the ‘192 publication, the user’s fingerprints are stored in a print data memory 5 in advance (see, e.g., FIG. 1 and paragraph 0045 of Takahashi).

Therefore, even if Takahashi was somehow combined with the '192 publication, there would be no teaching or suggestion of temporarily storing the user's fingerprint information that is simultaneously read by both (1) a terminal apparatus, and (2) a scanner.

Regarding the rejection of dependent claims 6, 11, 14, 17, and 20, the proposed combination does not teach or suggest at least an information deleting means for deleting fingerprint information after scanning is completed or a predetermined time has elapsed.

On pages 10-11 of the Office Action of 01/04/2007, steps B7 and B8 of FIG. 3 and paragraph 0049 of Takahashi were cited allegedly for teaching the above claimed feature. However, Takahashi does not teach or suggest deletion of fingerprint information "when a predetermined time has elapsed" as claimed. Moreover, there is no teaching or suggestion of only "temporarily" storing the fingerprint information as claimed.

It is believed that the claims are in condition for immediate allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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